

Regional Food Security & Nutrition Update

Regional Bureau Nairobi, November 2021

Highlights :



About **58.6 million** people are facing severe acute food insecurity in East Africa. This includes IPC figures from rural population (**31.4 million people**), urban population (**15.7 million**), and IDPs and refugees (**11.5 million**). The situation continues to deteriorate, an additional 1.4 million could face acute hunger in the next 6 months.



Food insecurity in Tigray and the conflict affected areas in Northern Ethiopia is critical, with residents and IDPs in urban areas worse off than the those in rural areas.



In Tigray, child malnutrition (proxy GAM) in September 2021 worsened to 22.7% from 17.1% in February while was as high as 70.4% from 51.2% over the same period for PLW. Three woredas had child malnutrition above 30% while in excess of 20% in 5 woredas. The situation is set to worsen going into the lean season despite some upcoming harvests.



The eastern Horn of Africa is facing severe drought conditions affecting mainly eastern, north-eastern & coastal Kenya, southern Somalia and southeast Ethiopia, resulting in additional 1 million people since August 2021. according [FAOSWALIM](#), more than 80% of Somalia is experiencing severe [drought](#) conditions.



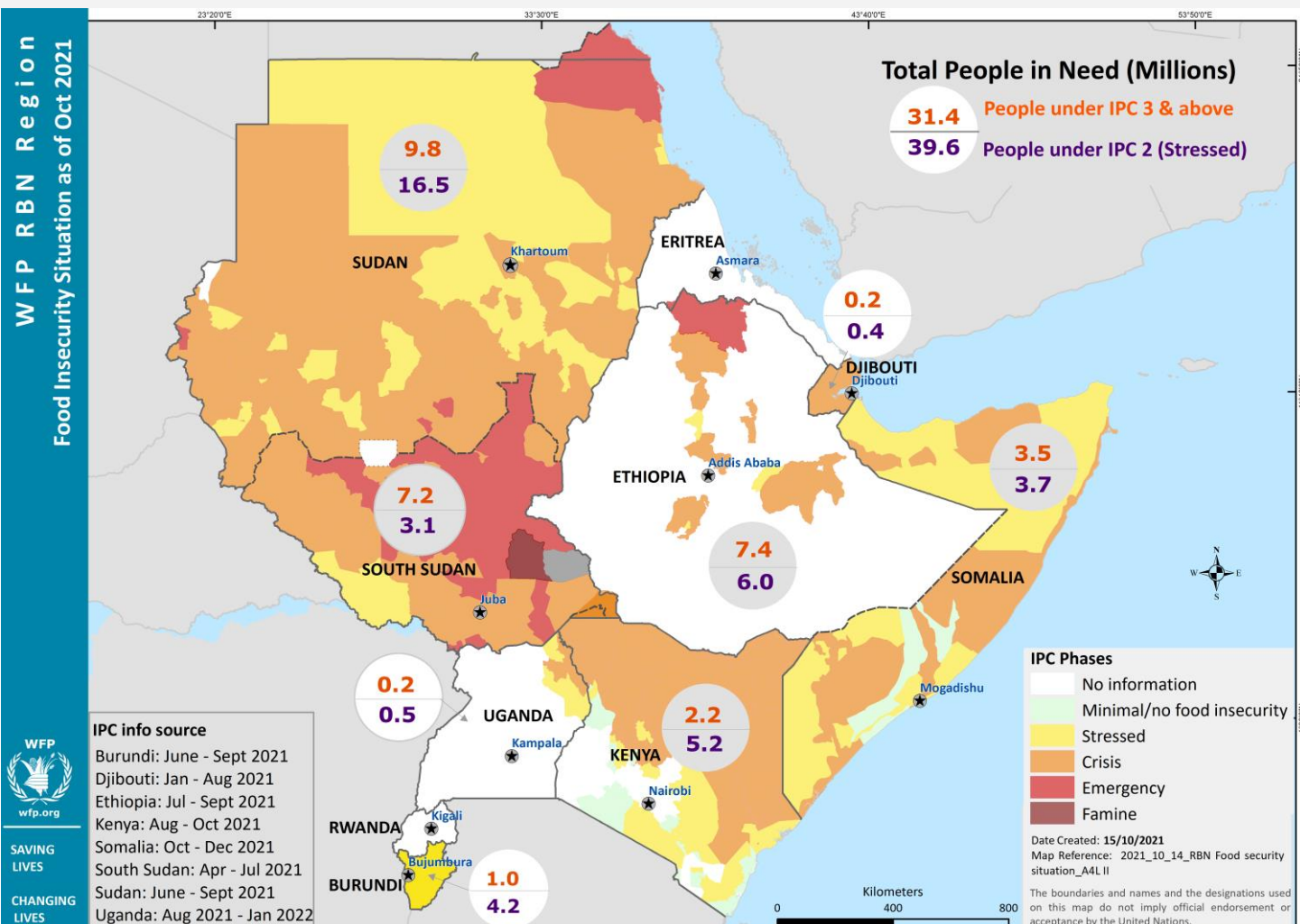
The current drought has already triggered a food price crisis in parts of Southern Somalia beyond the levels witnessed during 2008 global economic crisis, the 2016/17 drought and the 2011 famine. High food inflation expected in Southern Somalia through the next GU harvests.



A third successive year of massive flooding in South Sudan has led to massive displacements, limited movements, disrupted livelihoods, harvests and delivery of assistance. Over 300,000 people in Sudan and 760,000 people South Sudan have been affected.



Ethiopia drought (©UNICEF Ethiopia/2017/Nahom Tesfaye)





Food security overview

According to the recent food security IPC analysis, Sudan (9.8 million), Ethiopia (7.4 million) & South Sudan with 7.2 million food insecure are among the ten worst food crisis globally, accounting for nearly 78% of the East Africa's regional caseload. Considering **Somalia (3.5 million)** and **Kenya (2.1 million)**, these five countries are home to 95% of all the food insecure people in East Africa. **South Sudan** has one of the most severe acute food insecurity with nearly 7 out of every 10 people (64%) facing acute hunger. An estimated 110,000 and 401,000 people in **South Sudan** and **Northern Ethiopia** (Tigray and conflict affected Afar and Amhara regions) respectively are facing famine like conditions. Floods, localized violence/ insecurity & high food prices continue to determine food security in South Sudan.

A complex humanitarian emergency persists in **Northern Ethiopia**. Renewed fighting from October continues to disrupt markets, livelihoods and delivery of the much-needed humanitarian assistance in Tigray and conflict affected neighbouring Amhara and Afar Regions. Widespread famine conditions is expected through December 2021 in Tigray because most of the displaced rely fully on humanitarian assistance that is not able to reach them because stocks are running out. Blockade on roads and insecurity have limited humanitarian supplies and delivery to Tigray. Food insecurity has also deteriorated in the insecurity flush points in Oromia, SNNP and Sidama regions on the backdrop of impending poor belg season harvests and increased displacements.

In **Somalia**, food insecurity is dire as nearly 3.5 million people face acute hunger (IPC Phase 3 or worse) during October–December 2021 period. Thousands are facing mild to moderate drought conditions in Southern Somalia (Middle juba, Gedo and parts of Bay and Bakool) that has depleted water and pasture resources, reduced availability and access to food because of below-average Gu production, anticipated poor Deyr production and below average milk production. At the same time, prices of staple cereals (maize and sorghum) have increased atypically in the last four months despite poor main “Gu” harvests in July. The drought conditions are expected to persist in many parts of the country until early 2022 ([FAOSWALIM](#), Aug 2021).

Kenya: The cumulative impact of two consecutive below average rainy seasons; the 2020 October – December short rains and the 2021 March to May long rains in addition to COVID-19 impacts increased humanitarian needs in the Arid and Semi-Arid counties of Kenya, leading to the declaration of drought as a national disaster on 8 September 2021. In addition, numerous forecasts converge to likely below-average October- December 2021 short seasonal rains. In excess of 2.1 million people were severely food insecure (IPC3+) between July and October, expected to increase to 2.4 million people from November through December 2021. This include an estimated 368,000 people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and 2 million people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), which is nearly triple the number of people (852,000) who were facing high acute food insecurity in October to December last year. Nine counties are expected to have the highest number of people in IPC Phase 3 and above from November 2021 onwards; Turkana, Mandera, Lamu, Garissa, Wajir, Kwale, Kitui, Tana River and Isiolo.

In **Sudan**, deteriorated economic and political environment, diminished labor & income opportunities, removal of government subsidies and floods led to rapid inflationary pressure on basic food items. An estimated **9.8 million people** are currently food insecure.

Food insecurity in **Karamoja and Northern Uganda** is expected deteriorate through the end of the year due to poor and delayed harvests and low agricultural labour income opportunities. In **Burundi** and **Rwanda**, expected near normal 2021 ‘Season B’ harvests is expected result in improved food security seasonally through December despite localized food access challenges. In Burundi, the ban on maize imports from the region and COVID-19 restrictions on cross-border trade & labor migration have resulted in higher food prices.

Table: Food Insecure Number as of October 2021

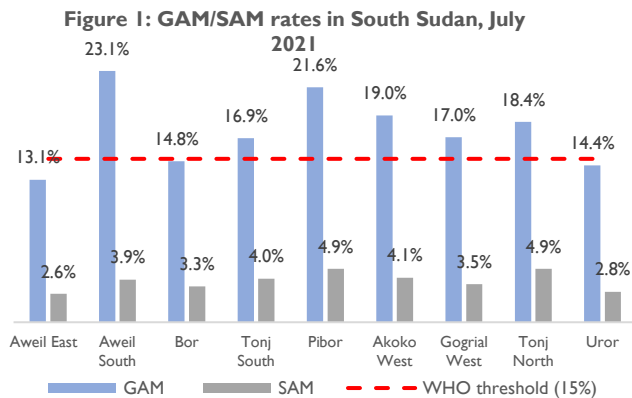
Country	UNDESA				Catastroph e	worse (food)	% food insecure
	Population (2020)	Stressed	Crisis	Emergency			
Burundi	11,980,000	4,200,579	988,419	56,365		1,044,784	9%
Djibouti	988,002	389,000	167,000	27,000		194,000	20%
Ethiopia	115,000,000	5,998,068	4,550,479	2,434,519	401,313	7,386,311	6%
Kenya	52,570,000	5,214,351	1,793,206	354,633		2,147,839	4%
Somalia	15,890,000	3,712,900	2,824,960	640,730		3,465,690	22%
South Sudan	11,190,000	3,138,000	4,668,000	2,413,000	108,000	7,189,000	64%
Sudan	43,850,000	16,525,736	7,072,838	2,696,783		9,769,621	22%
Uganda	44,270,000	470,610	159,930	27,725		187,655	0%
Total (IPC)		39,649,244	22,224,832	8,650,755	509,313	31,384,900	
Urban (WFP+ IOM Estimate)						15,700,000	
IDPs (UNHCR/IOM) Less 2.97 M in							
Somalia which are part of IPC						7,020,000	
Refugees (UNHCR)						4,535,201	
Total	295,738,002					58,640,101	20%

While most parts of Rwanda have a higher probability for normal rainfall, a few areas-Kirehe, Bugesera, parts of Gatsibo, Ruhango, Nyanza and parts of East have already experienced below normal rainfall in August-September, delaying planting and affecting germination.



Nutrition overview

In **South Sudan**, about 1.4 million children under five years are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition in 2021, including 313,391 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. From January – August 2021, a total of 150,955 children with SAM were admitted into WFP therapeutic nutrition services. The achievement is about 54% of the annual target and 48.2% of annual burden. Compared to the same period in 2020, there is an increase in admission of about 10.4%. The highest admission was recorded in Jonglei (22.6%) followed by Unity (15.8%) and Norther el Bahr Ghazal (10.04%)



In **Somalia**, An estimated 1.2 million children under the age of five are likely to be acutely malnourished ([FSNAU 2021](#)), including likely 231,00 SAM cases who require urgent treatment and nutrition support. The drivers of acute malnutrition include high morbidity, low immunization, low vitamin-A supplementation, reduced access to milk, and food insecurity.

In **Kenya**, the nutrition situation has remained within the same phase compared to February 2021 analysis across counties with an expected worsening situation through December 2021 in the ASALs. WFP has reduced admissions due to scale down of outreach services and stock out of commodities because of funding gaps.

In Ethiopia, a rapid analysis released by the **nutrition** cluster in September indicated proxy global acute malnutrition (GAM) levels amongst children under 5 in Tigray of 17.1% based on screenings since February, rising to 22.7% from the first 2 weeks of September. GAM levels amongst pregnant and lactating women for the same periods were 51.2% and 70.4% respectively. A “hotspot” analysis indicated 3 woredas had proxy GAM U5’s more than 30% and a further 5 woredas in excess of 20%. Some 56,000 children are expected to require treatment for severe acute malnutrition in 2021. In Afar, the displaced and people affected by conflict have extremely high rates of acute malnutrition as reported in some IDP sites following RNA earlier in September. In Amhara, critical nutrition situation is reported in some accessible areas.

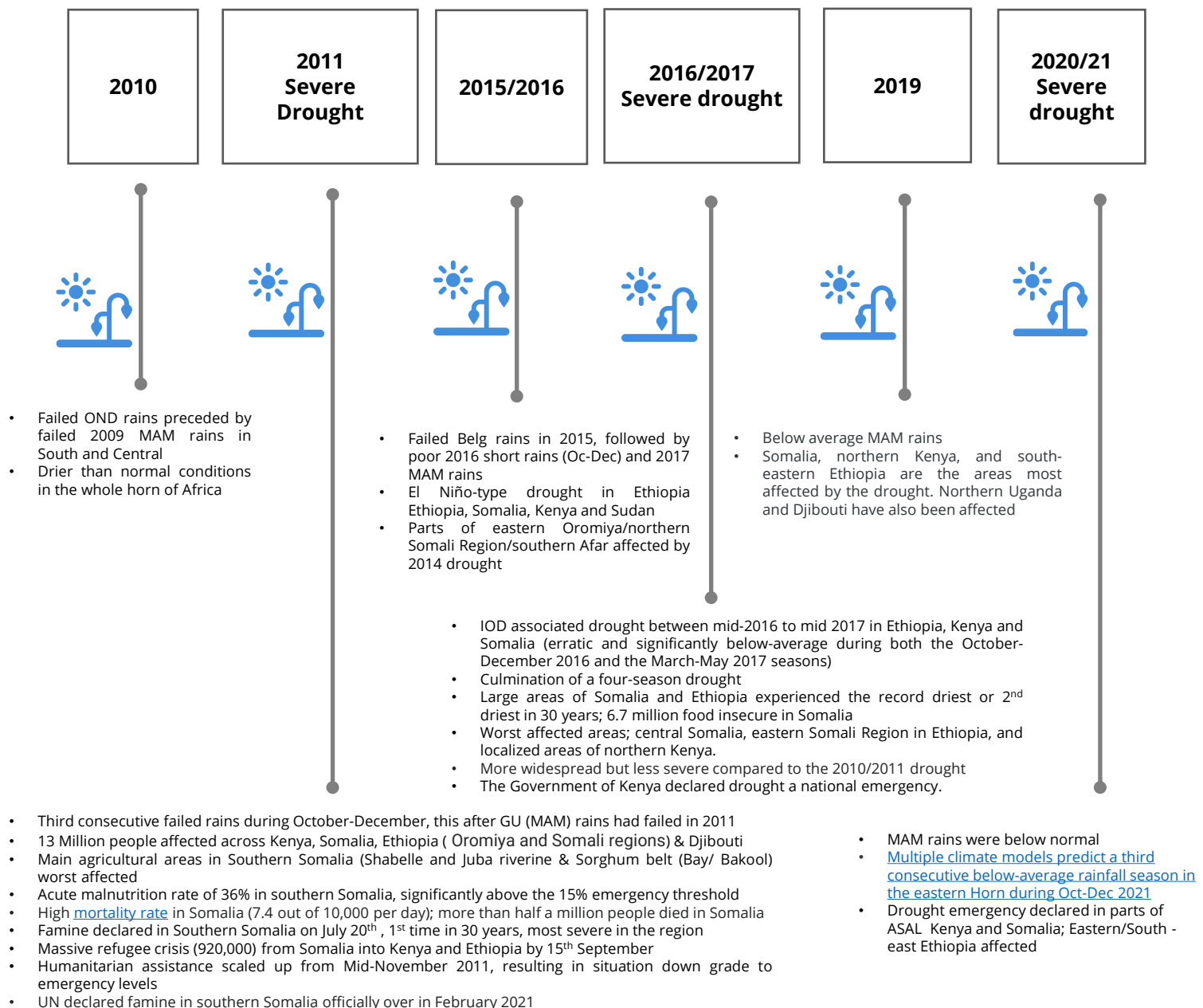




Horn of Africa drought chronology (2011-2021)

The HOA normally receives two rainy seasons in a year, March - May (Gu) and October to December (Deyr). With increased seasonal climatic variability and change, dry-spells/ drought conditions have become the new normal (chronic), more frequent and extreme with shorter recovery periods: 1980, 1984, 1989, 1992, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2005-2006, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2014-2015, 2016-2017 and 2020-2021. The most affected areas being Somalia, eastern and coastal Kenya, southern & south-eastern Ethiopia.

Historically, severe drought conditions have been experienced during periods of consecutive below average seasonal rains. Several back-to-back poor seasonal rains combined with conflict and macro-economic shocks have resulted in sharp deterioration in food security situation because of poor crop and livestock production, disruption/ loss of livelihoods/ assets (livestock), water shortages, outmigration and displacement. The most notable droughts in the last 10 years were 2011 famine in Somalia, 2016/ 2017 drought emergency, 2019/2020 and the ongoing 2021 drought crisis. The 2011 drought was the most severe following two consecutive poor seasons in Oct-Dec 2010 and March-May 2011, culminating in famine in Somalia and severe conditions in Kenya and Ethiopia. Over 13 million people were affected across the region and an estimated 260,000 people died in Somalia. WFP estimates 8-10 million people could face food insecurity purely because of the ongoing drought aggravated impacts should the situation persist through MAM 2022 season. See below the chronology of the recent drought episodes in the HoA.





Horn of Africa drought chronology (2011-2021)

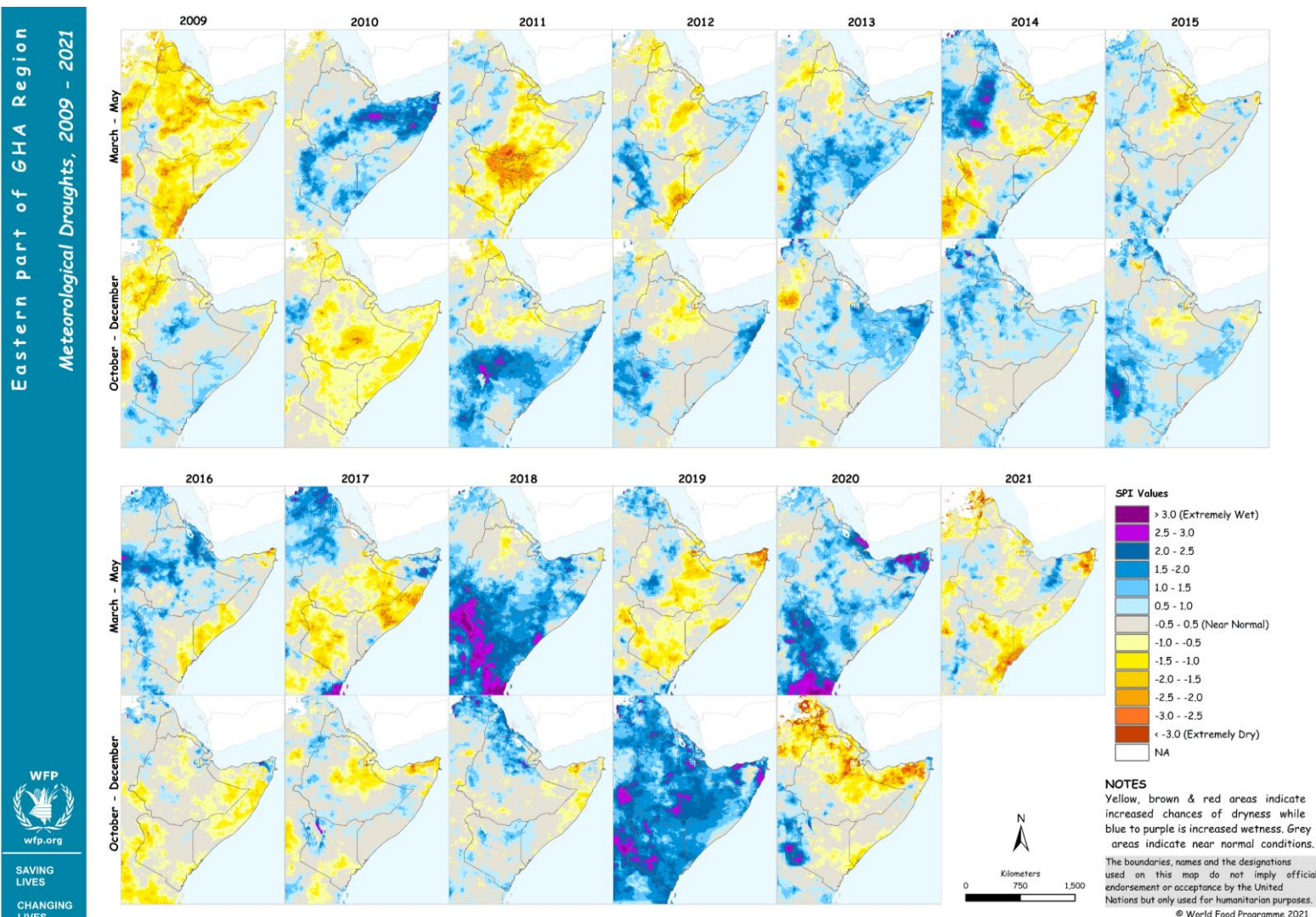
The other drought events after the 2011 famine, while still severe, the magnitude of the problem has been lessened by upscaled humanitarian assistance and resilience activities that have been implemented since the declaration by national governments in 2011 of ending the effects of drought emergencies in the region.

Consecutive poor seasons in 2016/2017 further led to drought conditions that grossly affected southern and central Somalia, eastern and coastal areas of Kenya and parts of southern Ethiopia. Similarly, a below-average Oct-Dec 2018 season followed by a delayed start and below-average March-May 2019 season affected nearly the same areas as in 2016/2017 but the magnitude and severity was less because of scale up of humanitarian assistance in Somalia that prevented the occurrence of famine conditions. While to some extent the region recovered given the favourable climatic conditions in late 2019 and early 2020, the heavy rains led to rising water levels in rivers and water bodies causing widespread floods across the region with severe impacts on food security and livelihoods.

Since late 2020, the cycle of poor climatic performance and drought conditions have persisted following two consecutive poor seasons in late 2020 and early 2021. This affected crop production in Somalia and marginal areas of Kenya, slowed rangeland regeneration and water replenishment leading to mild to moderate drought conditions in parts of the region. The inadequate rainfall during the seasons has been worsened by the dry and hot weather conditions over the non-rainy periods (Jan-March and June-Sept 2021).

This year, drought conditions have been declared in Somalia and pastoral areas of Kenya. The 2021 HOA drought crisis in parts of Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia is projected to extend to early 2022. The worst affected areas being Southern and South-eastern pastoral areas of Ethiopia, semi-arid lands (ASALs) counties - Turkana- Mandera, Garissa, Wajir, Baringo, Kilifi, Tana River, Kwale, Marsabit, Kitui, Kajiado and Isiolo of Kenya and southern Somalia. Fig 1 below provides a graphical summary of the recent droughts in the last 10 years.

Map: Meteorological droughts as revealed by the Standardised Precipitation Index (SPI) for MAM & OND seasons.

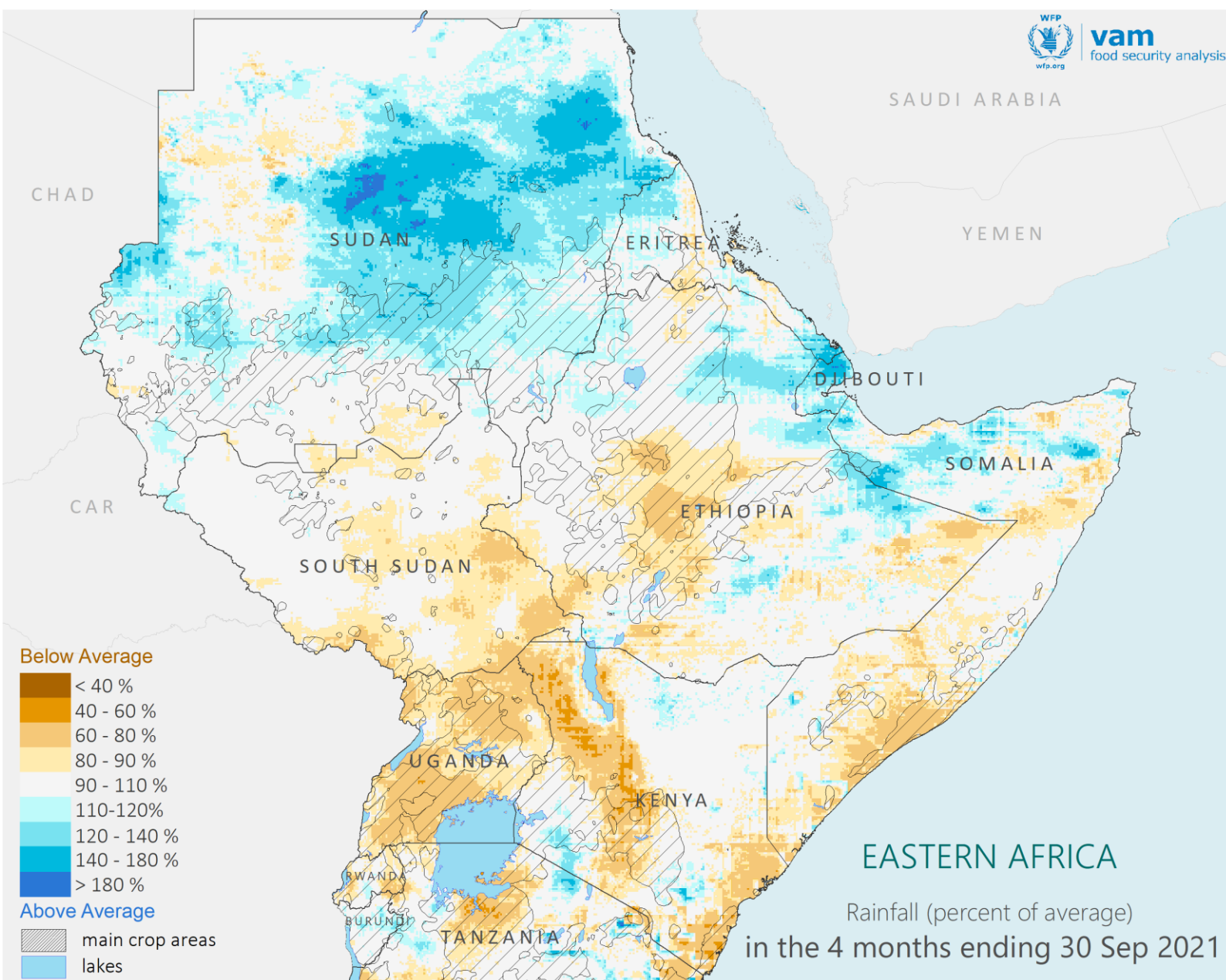




June-September 2021 rainfall performance

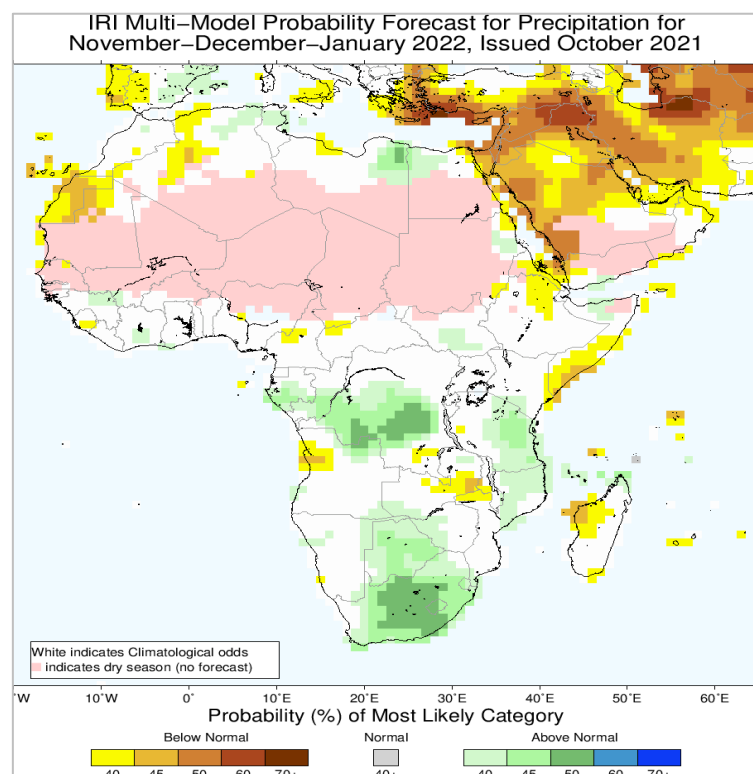
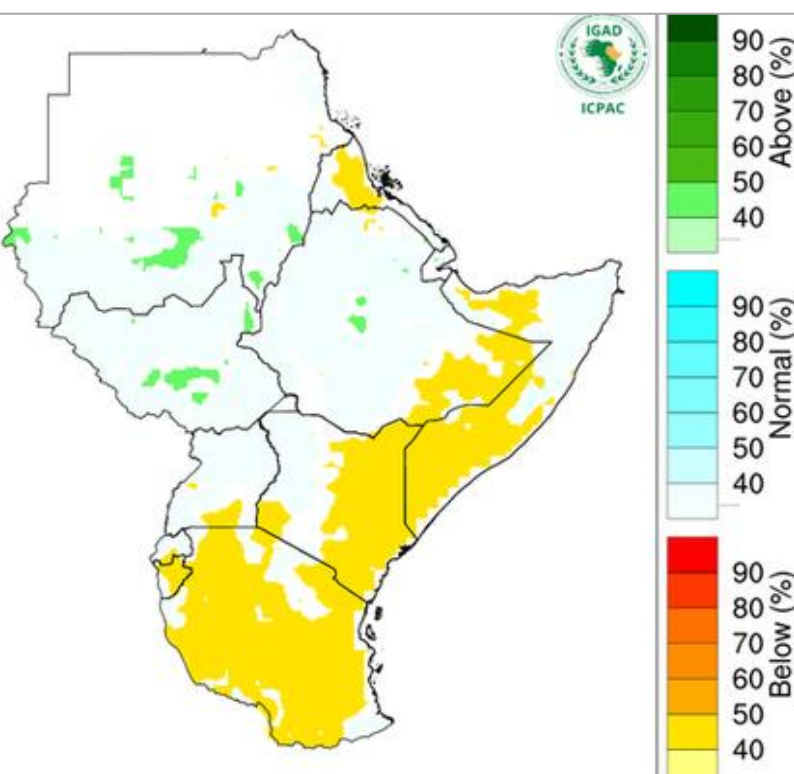
Over the June-September 2021 period, which marked the main season for the northern areas of the Greater Horn of Africa (GHOA), heavy rainfall was received in Sudan, South Sudan, western and northern Ethiopia, southwest Eritrea, northern Uganda and parts of western Kenya. Cumulatively, most of the northern areas received over 300mm of rain. The highest was in western Ethiopia and western South Sudan with over 600mm. The pastoral areas however remained dry, which was in line with the season. In comparison to long-term average, normal to wetter-than-normal conditions were experienced in Sudan, northern Ethiopia, northern South Sudan and isolated areas in northern Somalia (Map on the left).

The wetter-than-normal conditions coupled with high water levels in rivers and lakes, and saturated soils in some areas led to massive flooding in Sudan and large swarths of South Sudan, and flash floods in various locations in Ethiopia. Conversely, the dry conditions in pastoral areas following a poor March-May season led to rangelands and water resources deterioration. Mild to moderate drought conditions affected parts of Kenya and Somalia. With the ending of June-September season, the flooding situation is expected to lessen in the affected areas in the north. However, dry conditions may continue elsewhere given the forecasted below-average Oct-Dec rains.





Climate outlook over the October – December period



The October-December short-rains season benefits the equatorial areas of the region i.e. Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, equatorial states of South Sudan, southern Ethiopia and south-central Somalia. Global (IRI) and regional (IGAD-ICPAC) rainfall forecasts continue to point to a likely below-average rainfall condition in November-December period particularly in south-central Somalia, eastern Kenya, southeast Ethiopia. Normal situation will prevail in other areas except southwest Kenya and Tanzania where favourable rains are likely (in Tanzania this is associated with the start of Vuli and Msimu rains).

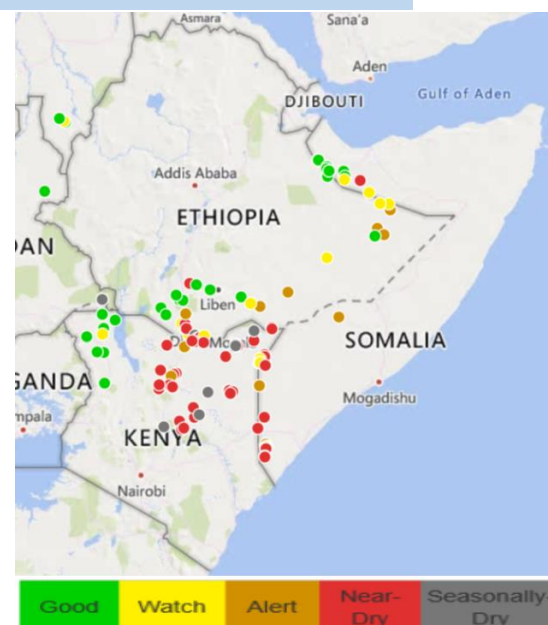
A likely third consecutive below-average season in south-central Somalia and eastern Kenya is of concern because it will compound the already fragile situation. It will negatively impact on the development and production of short-rains crops in southern Somalia and marginal agricultural areas of eastern and coastal Kenya. It will also challenge rangelands regeneration and water replenishment. The cumulative effect of consecutive poor seasons, which will be followed by a lengthy dry and hot climate in January-March 2022 will increase vulnerability among the already affected populations.



Status of surface water points

According to the latest info by the FewNet Water Point Monitoring System, most water points in NE Kenya, border areas in southern Somalia, and in SE Ethiopia are in alert to seasonally dry condition. This implies that water availability for human, livestock and wildlife consumption is limited. The situation is likely to deteriorate unless the Oct-Dec rains are able to replenish the water levels. However, this could be challenged if the rains perform poorly as forecasted.

Poor seasonal performance would therefore lead to severe water shortages in affected areas, continued animal concentration around water points with possibility of disease transmission, livestock trekking long distances in search of water or livestock outmigration. Coupled with scarce and rangelands livestock deaths could continue. Milk production has decline in the worst-affected communities while higher livestock sales than normal is expected if the worsening situation continues.





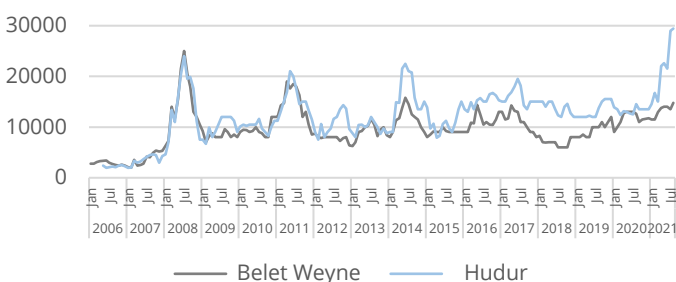
Drought impacts on food security in the HoA

In terms of severity, the 2011 drought was the worst drought in Somalia in 60 years, covered more areas, more severe than any other subsequent episodes and triggered an official declaration of famine. The 2017 drought was mild to moderate except some very few areas in central Somalia. The 2021 drought situation is not to that level of 2011 in terms of severity, but the onset of the OND 2021 short rainfall season is already delayed in the eastern Horn through end of October, extending the suffering of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. Many livestock keepers have not yet fully recovered from the 2016/2017 drought losses and have low herd sizes, with a risk of stagnation or decline. Should the OND rains fail completely, [FEWSNET](#) projects excess accelerated livestock mortality in January/February 2022 dry season. Nonetheless, unlike 2011, there are a number of ongoing resilience and humanitarian interventions which could cushion the most vulnerable. Taking lessons from the 2011 Somalia Famine, the early declaration of drought as a national emergency by the Governments of Kenya and Somalia has triggered early response.

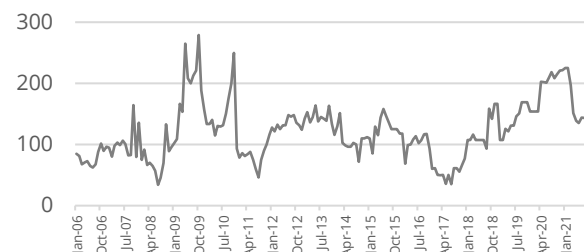
Significant increase in cereal prices in Somalia have always coincided with the past drought episodes (2011, 2015 and 2017) and the 2008 global economic crisis. In the current drought, the price of staple foods are soaring in the worst affected areas- in Hudur for instance, maize prices have surpassed 2008 & 2011 levels despite recent minimal harvests. The August 2021 maize prices in Hudur and Belet Weyne are 80% above the five year average, higher than during the 2011 and 2017 droughts. Prices of red sorghum, another staple in Central Somalia is also on the increase even though below the past crisis. This is an indication that the current drought has already triggered a food price crisis in parts of Southern Somalia beyond the 2008 global economic crisis and the 2011 famine. Therefore the prices of locally produced staples will continue increasing trends in Southern Somalia until the next harvests in July 2022.

Access to food is low and declining across the drought affected areas in the eastern horn of Africa. Milk production has reduced and there are [reports](#) of livestock deaths because of lack of adequate water and pasture in parts of southern Somalia and parts of Ethiopia's Oromia Region. Economic access to food from the markets has also been affected by the drought through lower purchasing power of livestock keepers and households that depend on seasonal farm labour to survive. In Southern Somalia, the purchasing power of livestock keepers has dropped (Fig.), because of high cereal prices and reduced casual labour wage rates. In Galkayo market for instance, ToT has been on a free fall since Feb 2012, although still above their levels during 2008, 2011 and 2017 crisis. The Gu harvests in Southern Somalia were below average, same case projected during the Deyr season. Annual harvest in Karamoja (Uganda), the national belg production in Ethiopia and the long rain harvests in Southeast Kenya are expected to be below-normal. However, agricultural production is likely to be average to slightly above average for much of the northern sector, except in the conflict-affected areas of Ethiopia. In South Sudan, there are prospects of slight improvements in yields, only negated by localized violence and floods.

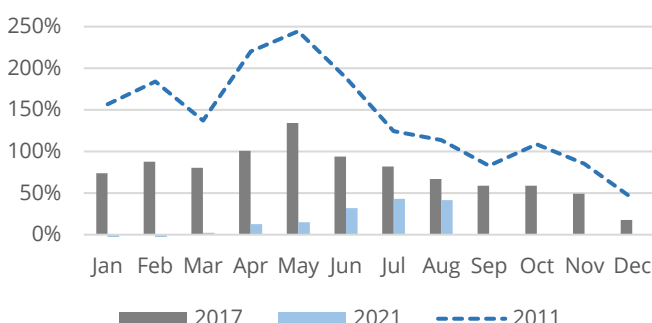
Maize price trends- Southern Somalia



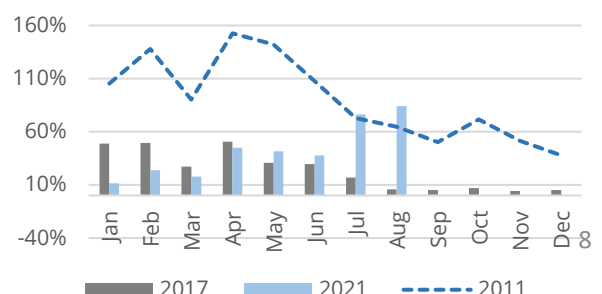
ToT, Goat to cereal (Galkayo Market, Somalia)



Sorghum price % 5-YA -Southern Somalia



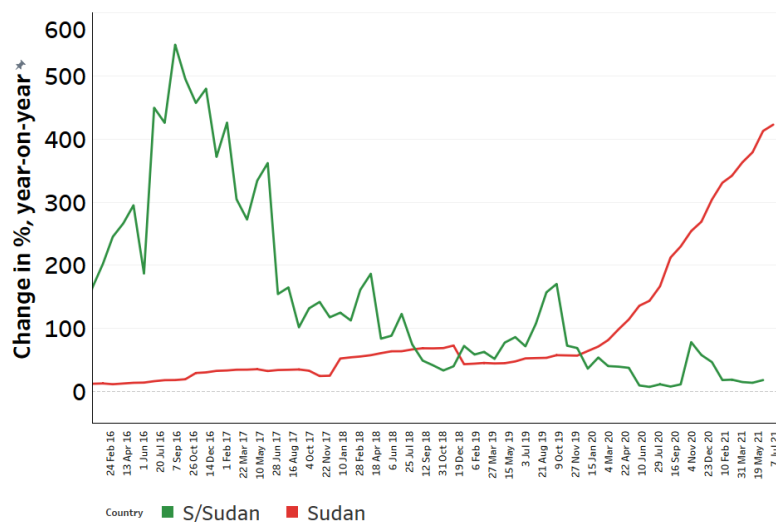
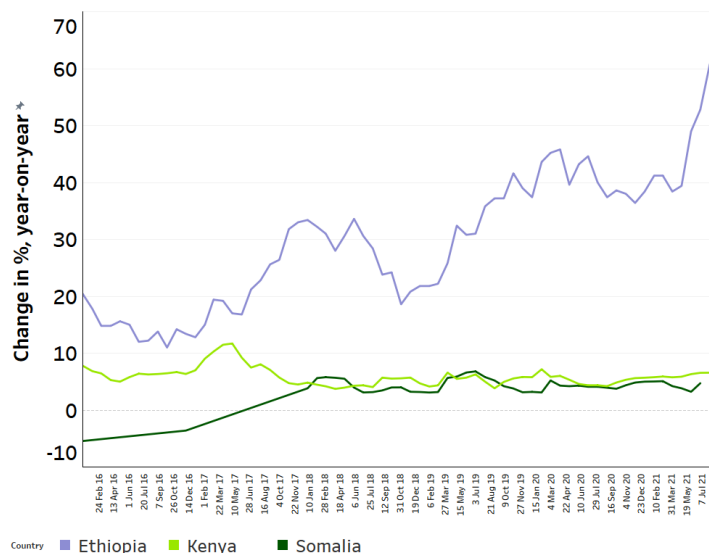
Maize Price % 5-YA -Southern Somalia



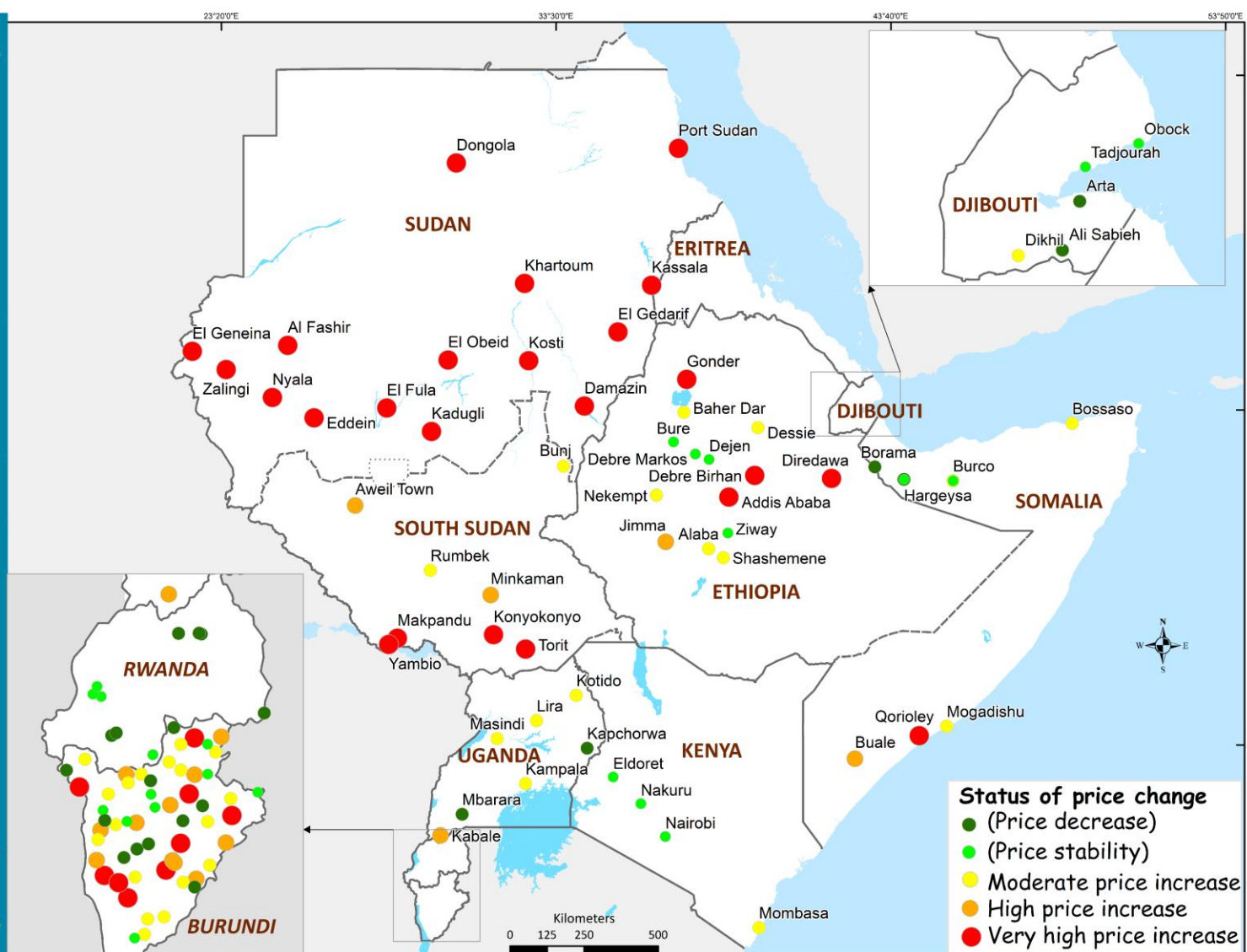
Food prices and inflation



Year-on-year food inflation currently highest in Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia in that order, in line with high food prices. Annual food inflation rates are relatively lower in the rest of the countries but still in double digits (Kenya, Somalia, Uganda); but very low in Rwanda (-3.7%) and Djibouti.



Compared to the long-term (5YA) levels, staple food prices are significantly elevated in Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi & parts Southern Somalia; moderate increase in Uganda, stable in Kenya, Djibouti and decreased in Rwanda. This is in line with seasonal trends, macro-economic, floods and drought impacts.





Other food insecurity drivers

Conflict & displacement

Conflict impacts on household food security through several pathways- displacement, disruption or loss of livelihoods, depletion of livelihood assets and impediments to delivery of much need humanitarian assistance.

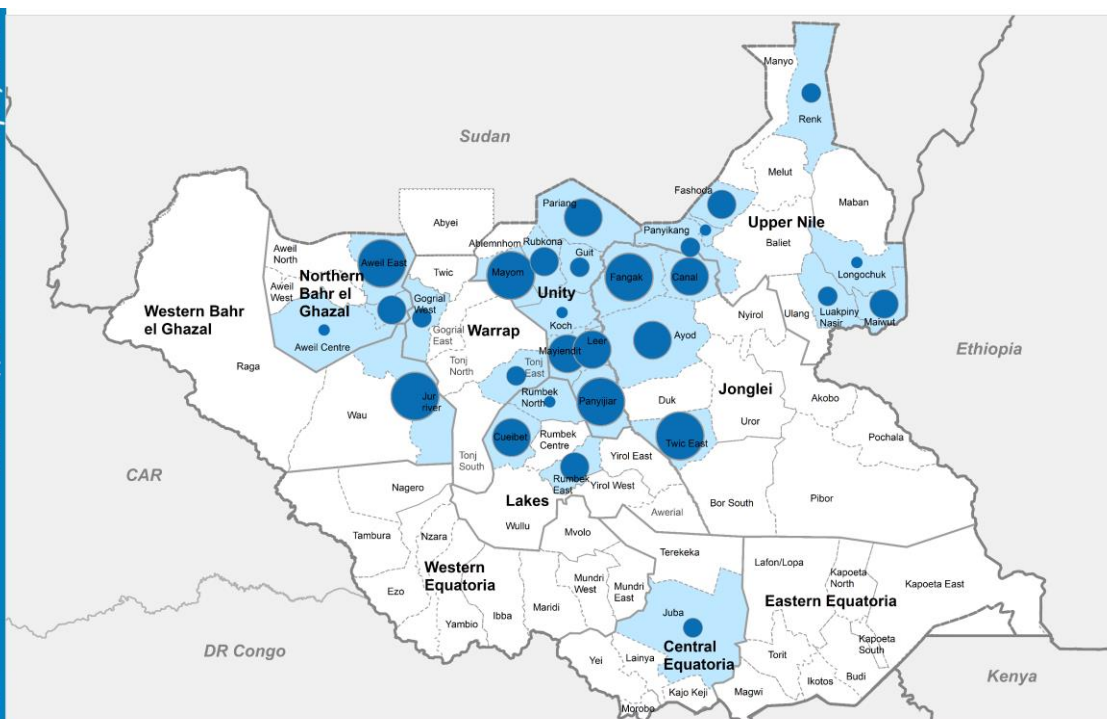
In South Sudan, the fighting between armed groups in Yei County (Central Equatoria) has displaced about 650 people to Yei town while others reportedly fled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Inter-communal violence was reported in Pibor, Akobo and Nyirou counties of Jonglei and Tonj North in Warrap and Tambura County (Western Equatoria), the latter displaced an estimated 80,000 people. The sub-national violence in Greater Tonj (mainly Tonj East and Tonj North) is likely to persist despite recent efforts by various parties. SPLA-IO fragmentation in western part of Upper Nile state and northern Jonglei will continue to disrupt livelihoods.

In Tigray Ethiopia, renewed conflict in the last three months that spilled into the neighbouring regions of Amhara and Afar and the recent escalation from mid October 2021 has constrained humanitarian access, closed markets, displaced populations, resulting in high food prices. As of September, an estimated 2.1 million people were internally displaced in Tigray, 250,000 in the Amhara region, and 112,000 in the Afar region. With very limited access to humanitarian aid, cities hosting large numbers of IDPs such as Shire, Adwa, and Axum are running out of supplies to support incoming and existing IDPs. There is a risk of further displacements and increased the number of people facing hunger.

Floods

According to the [UNOCHA](#), Sudan experienced the worst flooding in the last 100 years in 2021. Recent heavy seasonal rains and flash floods in 14 out of 18 states affected an estimated 314,500 people, destroyed and damaged homes, public infrastructures and farmlands. Aj Jazirah, South Darfur, Gedaref and West Darfur were the most affected states. There are concerns that floods in the middle of the season will affect crop production despite favourable production outlook.

In South Sudan, extensive flooding continued for a third consecutive year. Currently, over 750,000 people in 31 counties, spread across 8 states, have been affected. Over 365,000 people have been temporarily displaced, adding to already high levels of [internal displacement](#). The Nile River has now reached its [highest](#) levels in 100 years. Flooding has delayed planting and damaged growing crops in affected areas and is likely also to affect food availability from the ongoing harvests. Floods have also impacted delivery of humanitarian assistance.



In Burundi, persistent flooding because of rising Lake Tanganyika water levels aggravated by the current rainy season continues to affect communities in the Western parts of the country.

Boundary status
 — International boundaries
 - - - Armistice/international administrative lines
 Other lines of separation

Flood affected people
 50,001 - 100,000
 25,001 - 50,000
 10,001 - 25,000
 5,001 - 10,000
 1 - 5,000

N
 Kilometers
 0 125 250

Data sources
 Floods: WFP South Sudan Monitoring
 The designations employed in the map does not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of WFP concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country or
 © Oct 2021

Food security outlook and implications



Overall, food security situation is expected to deteriorate towards the end of year in the region, more severely in among the drought affected pastoralists/ agro-pastoralists in much of the northern horn of Africa (central, southern and eastern Ethiopia, Southern Somalia and ASAL counties in Kenya) and Karamoja (Uganda), the conflict and flood displaced people in South Sudan and in Northern Ethiopia where armed conflict has led to famine like conditions.

It is increasingly eminent that the eastern horn of Africa will experience successive multiyear drought again into 2022, resulting in massive livestock and income losses. According to [FEWSNET](#), there is an elevated chances of a fourth consecutive below-average rainfall season from March to May 2022. Should the current drought persists into the next rainy season (MAM 2022), food prices in worst affected areas in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia will likely surpass the levels seen during 2011 and 2016/17 drought episodes. As a result, widespread food crisis and emergency in the worst affected areas in the eastern horn, pushing an estimated 8-10 million people in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia into acute food insecurity primarily because of drought aggravated impacts.

Renewed fighting in Northern Ethiopia signals likely protracted situation that could potentially spill-over from the current epicentre into neighbouring regions. This will likely aggravate displacement, disruption of livelihoods and markets and constrained humanitarian space. The situation is already grave and alarming, there are increased concerns of widespread famine conditions on the backdrop of limited humanitarian supplies. Localized conflict and floods in South Sudan is expected to continue determining food insecurity in the affected areas. Different macro-economic shocks, notable; high and rising fuel prices, currency depreciation, inflation and COVID-19 impacts will continue limiting households' capacity to afford food from the market and sustain food insecurity, most pronouncedly in Sudan where food inflation is closing 600% y-o-y, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Burundi. The new political crisis in Sudan following recent military take-over will aggravate the already dire economic crisis.

Given that River Nile levels tend to peak between October and November, flooding in South Sudan is likely to continue disrupting agricultural activities and livelihood activities and consequently wider food consumption gaps.

Even though the restrictive measures instituted by different authorities to control the spread of COVID-19 have gradually reduced in scale concurrent with lower positivity rates, their effects through income losses and erosion of livelihoods will continue to affect household food security mostly in urban areas. On a positive note, projected likely average to slightly above average cereal production in Sudan, western Ethiopia, and South Sudan is likely to seasonally ease food prices and enhance access to food.



A person searches for water at a dry riverbed in eastern Kenya, photo by Flore de Préneuf/ World Bank



For further information

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